

17
REFLEXIONS

U P O N

Sach-----l's

THANKSGIVING-DAY,

A N D T H E

SOLEMNITIES

O F T H A T

Great Festival.

In a LETTER to a Friend in
the C O U N T R Y.

*They made a Calf in Horeb, and worshipped
the molten Image, Psalm. CVI. 19.*

L O N D O N,

Printed and Sold by *John Baker*, at the *Black-
Boy* in *Pater-Noster-Row*, 1713.

Price Three Pence.

Sach. 251/1(1)

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U P O N

Sach-----l's

Thanksgiving-Day, &c.

S I R,

SINCE I had the Happiness
of your good Company in
the Country, I have con-
tracted a great Debt to
you, which I am abler to ac-
knowledge than to pay, and there-
fore must throw my self upon
your good Nature to remit it.
I must beg you would believe,

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that

that the Promise I made you at parting, of a Packet of News once a Week, was the Effect of a long Retirement, and Unacquaintedness with publick Affairs for these last Three Years, and proceeded merely from a mistaken Opinion, that things were as they used to be before that *memorable* Period of time, when every *Flanders* Mail brought us something, that our own and our Countrey's Friends might read with Joy and Satisfaction. But I am told from good Hands, that Fashion has been out a great while; and can assure you, upon my own Knowledge, that since I came to Town, the Famine of News has been so general and uninterrupted, that I could find nothing to write to you that would be thought worth the Postage; and you know the Franks are now become a Monopoly to one Side.

I write this chiefly to let you know the Reason of my not writing before, for as to Entertainment,

ment, you are to expect none. An *Alta Quies* seems to have possess'd this part of the Nation, and the Generality of the People enjoy a kind of an *indolent dozing*. The Physicians now in vogue give out, that this State of Insensibility is really a sound, natural, salutary Rest; but others take upon them to say, that it is *Lethargic*, and the Effect of a Distemper. Which of these Two Opinions is the right, I have too little Skill in State-Medicine, and too much Caution to venture to determine.

The frequent Prorogations have, no doubt, reach'd your Corner of the World, and that the Occasion of them is commonly believed to be the Delay of the Peace. Those Halcyon-Days, so much talked of, seem indeed to advance towards us with a very slow pace, and when they will arrive is not very certain. Our Couriers, like *Noah's Dove*, are sent out to see if the Waters of Discord are
abated

abated from the Face of the Earth, but, like her too, come home empty, and we are told we must stay yet other *Seven Days*, and then they are again sent forth, and then too they return again without the expected Olive-Branch.

What the Reasons of these Procrastinations and Disappointments may be; whether they proceed from bad Roads and Difficulties in the Way, or from a well-natured Design to enhance the Value, and sweeten the Enjoyment of the long-promised Blessing, when we get it, are amongst the *Arcana Imperii*, those Mysteries of State, which we lower Mortals are now-a-days forbidden to look into. But after all, if one may guess at great things from small Appearances, this mighty Business should not be far off; for the Musick, composed for the Thanksgiving, has already been rehears'd at St. *Paul's*. Now in all Theatrical Representations that ever I
heard

heard of, the Rehearsal does not use long to precede the Action, from whence we may pretty safely conclude, that the *glorious Thanksgiving* it self is at hand. But by the way, there are some malicious Fellows, that give even this matter an invidious Turn, and say, that it is but an awkward Piece of Devotion paid to the Deity in the Place where he is supposed to be peculiarly present, to give him the mean Entertainment of tuning the Instruments, in order to be able to perform the more perfectly before his V-----

For my own part, I had such an Opinion of the near Approach of this fine thing, called *Peace*, that it is not many Hours since I was firmly perswaded that it was here, even at the Door. And since I have nothing better to divert you with, I will give way so much to the Noise which still continues in my Ears, as to tell you the Occasion of it.

When

When I wak'd this Morning, I found my self in the midst of a general Clangor of Bells, which was soon after followed by several Discharges of Cannon, Shouts, and Huzza's, and such other usual Expressions of a publick Joy. I immediately consulted my Almanack, and found it was no Calendar Holiday, upon which I could not but conclude, that the great Occasion of all these mirthful Appearances must be, that the Peace was landed safe, and in good Condition, upon the *English* Shore. You'll easily believe, that this Conjecture spurr'd my Curiosity on to an Inquiry, which I have since repented of; for one of the Porters of the House soon informed me, with much Satisfaction in his Look, mixt with an Air of Surprise at my Ignorance in the matter, *That now the Time was come when the DOCTOR might have Liberty to Preach, and that was the Reason of the Rejoicings.*

Not-

Notwithstanding that I have been a little enured of late to prodigious and unaccountable *Phænomena*, yet it is not easie to frame an Idea of the Astonishment and Indignation, that at once fill'd my Mind upon this Occasion.----- Is it come to this, thought I, that the highest Instances of Honour and Regard, that the People know to pay to Heroes, Conquerors, and the greatest Benefactors of Mankind, must be perverted and abused to celebrate at once the Guilt and Success of the blackest Crimes! Are those Instruments of Rejoicing, which I have heard sound the Glories of the REVOLUTION, and the Victories of JOHN DUKE of MARLBOROUGH, to whose Peals I have so often drunk to the immortal Memory of our GREAT DELIVERER, and the Health of that ILLUSTRIOUS GENERAL, ravish'd and forc'd to proclaim a nauseous, detestible Adoration to an

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in-

infamous Priest, who would have preach'd us back into the Slavery, ---- from which that R E V O L U T I O N rescued us, and lost us the Benefit those Victories procured for us!

Quis furor O Cives ! que tanta Insania!

I dare not trust my self too long to the Heat that this Subject inspires; but to cool a little upon the matter, can there be a more malignant Symptom of the Degeneracy of a People, than such a vile Prostitution of publick Respect and Applause? It is true, there is no real Honour in the Roarings of Cannon, Ringing of Bells, or Acclamations of a Multitude, if they proceed not from an honourable Reason and Foundation: But that is not the Question here. Things of this Nature must be taken as they are intended, and as the Expression of the Sentiments of those that do them.

The

The outrageous Extravagancies that appear'd during the *Trial*, might admit of this Excuse; that they were done in a Fit of blind Zeal, the worst sort of Madness; when the People were industriously work'd up into an Opinion, that the Church was in Danger, and the whole sacred Order struck at in this Person: But to see the same things re-acted, after an Interval of Three Years, when there are no such Ingredients in the Case, and the Passions have had Leisure to subside; when one would fancy there must have been some Returns of Thinking and Reflexion, and that of the most affecting sort, Reflexion upon the fatal Consequences of what they did before; I say, to see the same things re-acted after all this, is a sad Indication of a corrupt and malicious Mind, and that the Venom has passed into the Heart. What was done at first might be called Man-slaughter upon the Constitution, but this is wilful Murder.

The Phrensy of the *Neopolitans*, after *Massaniello* the first, lasted but a few Days, and then turn'd upon the Author of it. That of the *English* Mob, after this second *Massaniello*, has survived almost as many Years without any Signs of Recovery. What is become of the various Humour of the *English* Nation arising from the changeable Temper of our Climate, which we hear of so often amongst Foreigners? Tho' we have been reproach'd with that as a Fault, yet we had this Advantage from it, that as we chang'd often from Good to Evil, so on the other Hand, from Evil to Good. But now we seem to be seiz'd with a Fit of Constancy the wrong way, and to be instable only in good Humours, fixt and permanent in bad.

I would be glad to know what the Men of Ambition, and that court popular Applause, think of
this

this Affair, and how they intend to value themselves hereafter upon the Acclamations of their Country-Men. Let them go out as Generals, and out-brave a Thousand Deaths in foreign Fields, and make for them a successful War; Or let them, if they like that better, go as Plenipotentiaries, spend ----- their Strength and Spirits in the Arts of the Cabinet, and negotiate for them a happy Peace, and what shall be the Reward of all their Toils and Labours? Why truly, the same Honours, the same wonderful Testimonies of Respect shall be given to them, that have been polluted in an Offering to this *Idol*.

You and I, my Friend, have often read over with Pleasure those Passages of *Cicero*, where he exalts and triumphs with so much Pride of Heart, in the publick Professions of Joy and Veneration with which his Country-Men receiv'd him out of Banishment.

nishment. Pardon me, ye *Manes* of the Heathen Orator, that I mention him in the same Page with the Christian Priest! But I cannot help imagining to myself what this great Man would have done, if he had lived to see those Honours upon which he used to pique himself and feed his Vanity, prophaned at so impious a Rate. Had he lived to see the Day when a Tongue that never spoke a wise or an honest Sentence, that has been a perpetual Prostitute to Tyranny in the Prince, or Faction in the People, should be received into the Pulpit with such Adorations and Solemnities as those, with which his own divine Organ, that never moved but in the Cause of Liberty and Virtue, was restored to the Senate-House, he would surely have drawn one long black Stroke over all his boasting Periods on that Subject, or else have satisfied himself with telling Posterity, That the Virtue and good Sense of his Country-Men was so much

much superiour to that of ours, that they must not pretend to judge of the Motives upon which the *Romans* acted, by any that now prevail amongst *English-Men*.

It would not, I believe, be unentertaining to know what the *French* Ambassador said, or at least thought of the *English* Nation, when he was first told the Reason of the Rejoicings of this Day; and whether he does not believe, that his great Master would think it reflected a Shadow upon his own Glory, to see the People compliment a Friar with the same Honours that they pay to him, upon his Birth or Accession-Days; and hold himself as much obliged to take Care of a Jesuit or Priest that should get such an Influence over the *French* Mobb, as of a *Clement*, or a *Raviliac*.

I have been seriously considering, but cannot for my Life find out what Notions have got into the

the Peoples Heads, and what mighty Advantages they expect from this happy Turn, upon which they let themselves out in such a Profusion of Joy. Do they imagine, that either their Souls or Bodies will be better taken care of? Or, that the Mouth of this Priest being open, will always serve as a Warning-piece to give Notice of any approaching Danger either in the Church or State? Strange Delusion! Because an insignificant Creature, the Puppet of a Party, was once employ'd (he did not know why, but was pleas'd to see it look'd like Mischief) as a Tool in giving Fire to a Train that had been long and deeply laid by other Hands, must be therefore look'd upon as the Guardian-Angel of the Isle, to trumpet the *Signal* to the Multitude, when they are to be Slaves or Rebels to their Governours? The present M-----y will own him only in the former Capacity, and scorn to own the Change, upon

upon which their Promotion was built, to so foul an Original. A certain Lord with a white Staff has frequently, in the Hearing of some of our Friends, said the most contemptible things of him. The Doctor, says he, like the Fly upon the Coach-Wheel, cries out, what a Dust do I raise! I believe you your self heard the same great Man, then a Member of another House, in the Debate about Recommitting the Articles of Impeachment, make it his chief Argument, That for that Body to pursue so contemptible a thing in a Parliamentary way, was to render the Prosecutions of the Commons of *Great Britain* vile and cheap; that their proper Game was the Lions and Tygers of the State, not the Hedge-Hogs and the Pole-Cats. Every Body knows, that his best Friends in the House of Peers, chose to put his Defence upon such Topicks as, if he were not abandoned to all Sense of Shame, should check him from

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ever appearing in a Pulpit as long as he lives: That the Sermon was nothing but an incoherent Rhapsody of raving Nonsense, a Heap of noise, uncharitable Words thrown together without any Sense or Meaning; and that there were in it such Marks of Ideocy or Lunacy, as were abundantly sufficient to acquit him of the Malice.

I will not enter into his private Character, since it has already been made appear too dirty for me to handle. Besides, I am afraid, *That* he has in common with too many that bear the same indelible Character. But there is one thing which I will not omit to mention, because it arises out of my favourite (a) Chapter in the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*. The great Apostle there says, *That tho' he spake with the Tongues of Men*

(a) 1 Cor. 13.

and Angels, tho' he had the Gift of Prophecy, and understood all Mysteries, and all Knowledge, and tho' he had all Faith, so that he could remove Mountains, and had not Charity, he was nothing. And if this be so, what are we then to think of a Man that cannot speak Sense in any Tongue, unless it be compos'd for him by others, who has neither the Gift of Prophecy, Knowledge, nor Faith; in a Word, understands no part either of divine or humane Learning? Surely the very best that can be said of him is, That he is *sounding Brass*.

Give me Leave (tho' it is a little foreign) to tell you one short Story of him, which is very well known at Oxford, and may serve as a Reason for my introducing Cicero just now with so much Ceremony. The Doctor, when a Tutor in the University, airing himself one Day in *Mudlin* Walks, met one of his own Pupils, a young Gentleman of

Quality and Fortune, whose Friends had dealt so ill by him as to put him into such Hands, and observing he had a Book in his Hand, ask'd him what he was reading. The Gentleman told him, it was a Piece of *Tully*. *What makes you read Tully, Sir,* says the Doctor, with some Warmth? *Read Sir H. M----- Works, and my Works, they'll teach you to know Men and the World.* Did you ever hear such horrid Blasphemy against the most venerable Remains of Antiquity that we enjoy, except the Bible? Here's Instruction from a Master to a Scholar! Whether a Man that was capable of saying this ought not to have been made incapable of the Office of a Tutor for ever afterwards, I leave to the Vice-Chancellor and Heads of Houses to determine; but I am afraid such Advice has had too mischievous an Effect, and so far debauch'd the Minds of our young Gentlemen, as to

to make them leave those sacred Fountains, out of which they might draw pure and useful Knowledge, for the nasty Puddles of such factious Libels as are here recommended.

I would willingly converse with you a little longer, but a Parishioner of the Doctor's bombards me from his Battery on the other Side the River, with so much Fury, that I can hardly think quietly, or write steddily. When I hear what Healths, and what Confusions have been drank in the most celebrated Clubs on this Festival-Night, and whether an Anniversary Thanksgiving is intended to be kept on this Occasion, you may expect another Trouble. At present I'll go out, and try to get together a small Party, that we may make a Sally, and nail up the Enemy's Cannon; for if the Cannonading continues

nues at this violent Rate, I
shall have my Chambers tum-
bling about my Ears before to
Morrow Morning.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Yours, with great Re-

spect and Sincerity,

Inner-Tem-
ple March
23^d, 1712.

PHILOPATRIUS.

P. S. A Gentleman just now
come in, whispers me in the
Ear, that there is a Plot at
the Bottom of all this Noise and
Out-

Outrage, and that it is spirited up with Design to force a Preferment for the Doctor, which the M— have no Mind to give him, by terrifying them with this monstrous Appearance of his Interest amongst the People. This is Passive-Obedience in grain!

F I N I S.

Ourage, and that it is joined
up with Design to force a Pre-
sident for the Doctor, which
the M— have no Mind to
give him, by revealing them
with this monstrous Appearance
of his Interest amongst the Peo-
ple. This is Passive-Obedience in
grain!

F I N I S

